A Second

APOLOGY

FOR

Mr. TOLAND.

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Mr. TOLAND.

WHEREIN

He is Vindicated from the Vehement Aſperſions of his Enemies, and the hard uſage he met with in *Ireland*.

Qui laudem ſcribendo ſolum appetere cupit riſui & ludibrio plane habendus eſt.

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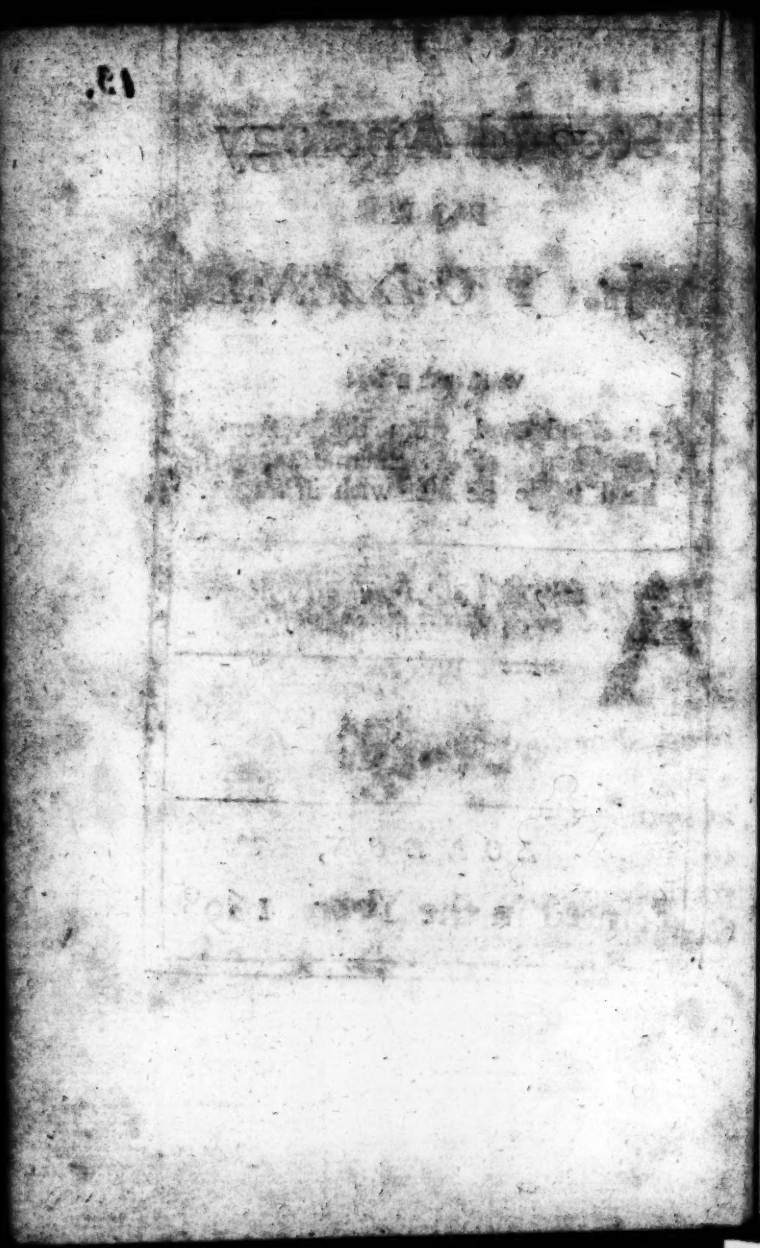

AN APOLOGY FOR Mr. TOLAND.

AMong all Nations and People, whether learned or unlearned, there has nothing been esteemed more commendable, than a diligent search after Truth; and as nothing can be more beneficial to Mankind, or more agreeable to their Nature, than Truth and Certainty in general, so in parti-

cular, about those things that relate to Religion and their Eternal Happiness. I think that those People who by an inward zeal are lead to endeavour after finding out Truth, are mightily to be commended, although they have miss'd their Aim, and out-shot their Mark: But yet it is a very difficult task to convince many Men, even of the most apparent falshoods, or any Man, that is prejudic'd, either by Education, or engaged in any Sect. For it is generally our misfortune to be most confident and positive when we are in the Wrong, and to make use of confidence to supply the weakness and want of Argument. There is such a strain of Vanity, and so great a love of Novelty that runs through and possesseth our minds, That we are very willing to expose

pose our selves, to the severe Censure of an illnatur'd World, without any regard to the promotion of Truth, or the good of Mankind, provided we can but gain the applause of some few (perhaps no better Judges than our selves) for the broaching of some upstart Opinion. Abundance of which we daily meet with; But that which I intend to Apologize for at this time, is a Book entituled *Christianity*, &c. and to wipe off, as well as I can, those causeless aspersions which many people have thrown upon it; and tho' it has been committed to the Flames in another Country, yet I don't doubt but I shall vindicate it from the ill opinion of my Countrymen and (if I be not mistaken) give a reasonable satisfaction to

those Gentlemen who thought fit to make considerable matter of it in *Ireland*. To this end therefore I shall distinctly consider these three things, Namely;

First, The Subject of the Discourse, *viz. Christianity not Mysterious.*

Secondly, The manner of handling it, in respect of the Sense.

Thirdly, The manner of handling it, in respect of the Style, together with some other short Remarks.

First, Then as to the Subject of the Discourse, *viz. Christianity not Mysterious.* Were it meant by this, that Christianity has afford-

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ed us the moſt plain and advantageous principles of Morality; I ſhould as willingly agree with this Author, as I do with the moſt Ingenious Mr. *Locke*, in his Opinion, that Morality is demonſtrable: but ſince Mr. *Toland's* meaning is, that thoſe points which are the controverted parts of Divinity are not myſterious, he muſt explain it in a leſs myſterious manner than he does, or I believe he himſelf, for all the clear reaſoning he pretends to, will not be found very intelligible. Mr. *Toland* complains mightily of thoſe people who underſtand St. *Paul* in his true Senſe, and would fain jeer them out on't: *In what ſenſe*, ſays he, *could this Myſtery be ſaid to be reveal'd, this ſecret to be made manifeſt, to be made known to all Na-*

tions by the preaching of the Apoſtles, if it remained ſtill incomprehenſible? Here Mr. *T——d* tells you, that St. *Paul* affirms the Myſtery was manifeſt, tho he does not explain how it was manifeſt, which I think, did he know it himſelf, he would have done. *A mighty favour indeed*, ſays the Author, *to bleſs the World with a parcel of unintelligible Notions or Expreſſions, when it was already overſtocked with the Acroatic Diſcourſes of* Ariſtotle, *with the Eſoteric Doctrines of* Pythagoras, *and the myſterious Jargon of the other Sects of Philoſophers; for they all made high pretenſions to ſome rare and wonderful ſecrets, not communicable to every one of the learned, and never to any of the vulgar.* All this I confeſs is not a myſterious Jargon,

gon, but it seems to me to be a very needless one, and much more impertinent to his pretended explanation of the Text, than to himself; for tho I don't at all question, but he thinks himself and his Opinion of incomparably more consequence to the World, than either of the forementionʼd Philosophers, who by his own description, pretended to some rare and wonderful secrets not communicable to every one of the learned, whereas he being much greater, and doing a much nobler and more beneficial act to mankind, pretends to a most rare and wonderful secret communicable to all the learned, but intelligible to none. Tho I suppose Mr. T——d, as he says of the Philosophers, knows his own

meaning well enough, though no body else does, whether you understand any thing more, by saying that the Christian Religion has nothing above or contrary to the strictest reason, than the words ordinarily import, I cannot tell. But if you would be understood in the literal sense, you discover no more by it than what every body knew before. But to come more closely to the matter in hand; you explain the word Mystery whether in the Gospel, or as to the whole extent of the word, by reducing it under these three Heads. *First*, you say, *that mystery is read for the Gospel or the Christian Religion in general, as it was a future dispensation totally hid from the* Gentiles, *and but very imperfectly known to the* Jews. Secondly, *some particular*

lar Doctrines occasionally reveal'd by the Apostles, are said to be manifested mysteries, that is, unfolded secrets; And thirdly, mysteries put for any thing veiled under Parables, or Enigmatical forms of Speech. Now these three things may very well be, and yet the word Mystery left unexplain'd; For though you say that Mystery is read in the Gospel, as it was a future Dispensation, that doth no way evince, that what was therein contain'd was made manifest after that Dispensation. And then as to your second Head, namely, that some particular Doctrines occasionally reveal'd by the Apostles, are said to be manifested mysteries; For my part I cannot see that through the whole tenour of the Gospel, but especially in the Writings of the

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Apoſtles, any of thoſe things which are generally receiv'd as myſteries, are ſo much as pretended to be made manifeſt. Indeed they are reveal'd, that is, you are inform'd that there are ſuch things, and ſo are left to make uſe of your own judgment concerning them: And whether you are clearly convinc'd of the truth of them, yet it is plain there is nothing in them repugnant thereto: Then to what purpoſe he explains manifeſt myſteries by unfolded ſecrets, I cannot apprehend, unleſs he deſigns to make his definition of the word Myſtery to be not one whit more rigorous, than the demonſtration of his Arguments: The former of which doth very much reſemble the Countryman's way of defining, who being ask'd by his Neighbour, what an Invaſion was,

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after ſome ſtudy, told him very gravely, That an Invaſion was as if he ſhould ſay an Invaſion: In like manner Mr. *T——d* tells us that manifeſted myſtery (or which is all one, ſecret) is the ſame with unfolded ſecret: which in my apprehenſion is but a Country-definition. Your third Head is, that myſtery is put for any thing, veil'd under Parables or Enigmatick forms of Speech. 'Tis true, and ſo you have left it: This indeed is the general ſignification of the word, but is of very little force to prove, that there are no myſteries in Chriſtianity, ſo that the ſum of all your Arguments only proves, and truly very plainly, that if a myſtery be known, why then it is no longer a myſtery. Mr. *T—d* for a further explanation of the word Myſtery, gives us this example; namely;

namely, that he is convinc'd, *that Plants have a regular contexture, and a multitude of Vessels, many of them equivalent or analogous to those of Animals, whereby they receive a Juice from the Earth, and prepare it, changing some into their own substance, and evacuating the excrementitious parts. But I do not comprehend,* says he, *how all these operations are perform'd, tho I know very well what is meant by a Tree.* Now instead of a conviction to the Patrons of Mystery, this is confirming them in their own sense; for they alledge, that altho they do not understand in what manner the Resurrection shall be perform'd, nor how the Incarnation of our Saviour could be, seeing he was God; yet they very clearly comprehend what they mean by the word Resurrection, and Incarnation. What

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Mr. *T——d* says of Bodies, may be as well applied to mysteries: *That knowing nothing of Bodies but their Properties, God has wisely provided we should understand no more of these than are useful and necessary for us*: So knowing nothing of mysteries but their names, morality is only left us to Cultivate, as being most necessary to our present condition. Whether what I say be strictly true or not, I am sure the practise of this would go a great way in putting an end to all the Differences and Controversies that arise so frequently from these Disputes. And as the Christian Religion was calculated for the mutual benefit of mankind, to take away Envy and Animosity, Strife and Contention, and all manner of inordinate desires; and likewise to sweeten our

Natures and Diſpoſitions; ſo on the contrary, we infringe and pervert the whole deſign of it, if we make any part of it the cauſe of diſſent and wrangling. I proceed to the ſecond thing I propoſed to ſpeak to. Namely,

Secondly, The manner of handling his Subject in reſpect of the Senſe. I wonder that ſo ingenious a man as the Book implies the Author to be, ſhould make ſuch an untoward uſe of the admirable Treatiſe of *Humane Underſtanding*; for I always thought that whoever ſpoke by that, muſt neceſſarily utter Oracles, but 'tis plain the beſt things may be corrupted, by being put into an ill Dreſs, like a Beaux, who without his fine Cloaths would be no more taken notice of than other people. What

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advantage it is in explaining Chriſtianity not to be miſterious, to define *what Reaſon is*, and *what it is not, and wherein it conſiſts*, I am not at preſent able to conceive; unleſs he would oblige his Readers to obſerve nicely the ſame way of reaſoning, that he himſelf does, and then its odds but they are all of his mind. I confeſs this is a ſhort and eaſie method of encreaſing the Sect of *Tolandiſts*, he is ſo much pleas'd with; but I am afraid this will procure no more implicit Faith in him, than he would have to be in the Prieſts: Moreover, what is ſaid concerning the *means of Information*, and the *ground of Perſuaſion*, is I think as foreign to his Subject as any of the reſt; for what occaſion there is for experience *External* or *Internal*, or *Humane Authority* to

underſtand or explain *Divine Authority*, is not to me very apparent: In like manner, the definition of ſweetneſs and cold, and the real and occaſional properties of a Roſe, and that ſomething he calls himſelf (as great as it may be) is of as little importance as the former in demonſtrating (which he always pretends to) his Subject. So that if Mr. *Toland* does not find any great matter of aſſent given to his Book, he will not aſcribe it to the Ignorance or Obſtinacy of the Reader, but to his own confus'd rationation, and uſing different Ideas from the reſt of mankind. The abſurdity and effects of admitting any real or ſeeming contradictions in Religion are at the firſt ſight obvious to every conſiderate mans underſtanding. But I ſuppoſe he deſigns to

tell

tell us ſomething new and ſuprizing about it. To this end, he ſays, *without the pretence of it we ſhould never hear of the Tranſubſtantiation, and other ridiculous Fables of the Church of* Rome; *nor of any of the Eaſtern Ordures, almoſt all received into the Weſtern Sink: Nor ſhould we be ever banter'd with the* Lutheran *Impanation, or the Ubiquity it has produc'd, as one Monſter ordinarily begets another.* Now after all this quaint Reaſon and rumbling Rhetorick, there is not only nothing hitherto ſaid, either new or unheard of, but all Trite and old patch'd up ſtuff. But now overlooking all obſervations he alone thinks proper for this place, *let us enter*, ſays he, (with great gravity and ſolemnity,) *upon the immediate examen of the opinion it ſelf.*

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The first thing I shall insist upon, is, that if any Doctrine of the New Testament be contrary to Reason, we have no manner of Idea of it. Indeed I want some of Mr. *T——d's* further instructions to be convinc'd of this; for pray how do we know that it is contrary to Reason, if we have no Idea of it? This is to know and not to know at the same time, which manifestly involves a Contradiction; which assertion is prov'd by his own Instance, he affirms to say, *that a Ball is white and black at once, is to say just nothing*; yes, it is to say that these colours are incompatible in the same Subject, which is a plain sign that I know it to be a Contradiction, which according to your principle, had I no Idea of it, I could not possibly do. His next Remark is

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That those who stick not to say they could believe a downright Contradiction to Reason, did they find it contained in the Scripture, do justifie all absurdities whatsoever. These people, if there be any such, speak this only to shew what confidence they have in Divine Revelation, not that they would actually do it, were there any Contradictions in Scripture: for if there were, sure I am it could not proceed from God, and consequently they would be to blame in believing it. It is probable there are but few of these, and really none at all, who reason solidly upon the matter; so that Mr. *Toland* is in this Argument or rather Sophism, put to his last shifts, and those too very unfair, to oblige the World for his want of a reason, to take upon themselves that

that which, it may be, they never once dreamt of. As to what follows in this Chapter, I own I do not understand the most part of it, but Mr. *Toland* not pretending that ever I heard of, to Divine Authority, I cannot abandon my reason, such as it is, to believe what I do not understand, but shall acquiesce and suspend my judgment untill he informs me better concerning it.

Our Author among other great commendations of the Scripture, says, and that very truly, *that it affords the most Illustrious examples of close and perspicuous ratiocination conceiveable, which*, he adds, *is incumbent on me in the explication of its mysteries to demonstrate.*

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Here he plainly contradicts himself, for by this rule Christianity is in itself mysterious, which he elsewhere positively denys; therefore it only wants his demonstration, and then it will infallibly be no mystery. Now either this must be his meaning, or he can have no meaning at all, and if this be it, he is certainly guilty of the greatest arrogance in the World, in pretending to demonstrate that which he tacitly owns every one to be ignorant of but himself.

Against all that Mr. *T——d* says, about *Faith*, I have but one thing to object; which is, that he doth not seem to make any distinction between Faith in a *Thing*, and Faith in a *Person*: Faith in a thing is according to the degrees of probability I conceive to be in

that thing, for without conceiving any manner of probability or consistency in any thing, I cannot freely give my assent or be perſuaded of the truth of it. But if a Perſon to whom I owe a great deference and reſpect, both for his extraordinary judgment and integrity, ſhould tell me any thing, I ſhould believe it without the leſt ſcruple, partly becauſe I found nothing in what he ſaid, contrary to my reaſon, and partly becauſe I was confident he would not deceive me, nor be the means of leading me into an error. But with much more confidence and aſſurance ſhould I truſt in whatever, God hath reveal'd, altho I am not altogether capable of comprehending it, becauſe I am ſatisfied beyond all doubt that Infinite Goodneſs and Omniſcience cannot

not impose upon me nor deceive me.

Mr. *Toland* in his last Chapter gives a very large and ample account of the Origin of Mysteries, wherein he does not only misapply a great deal of Learning and Reading; but likewise reflects in some measure on the Honorable Clergy, who, he saith, *were so Jealous of their own Order, lest any of them should irreligiously unfold these sublime mysteries to the Prophane Inquisitive Laity, that they thought fit to put it as much out of the power of the Holy Tribe it self, as out of ours, to understand them; and so it continues in a great measure to this day.* Here he is palpably mistaken, for the Priests are so far from concealing themselves, and their Opinions from us, and

making a myſtery of any of their actions, that they convince us that they alone are in an error, and all other conſiderate people in the right; and that they alone impoſe upon the ignorant, not out of any regard to myſtery, but becauſe they may enrich themſelves, and live upon the folly and ſimplicity of their Admirers.

Having ſaid as much as is neceſſary upon theſe two Heads, I proceed to the third and laſt: Namely,

The mannor of handling his Subject in reſpect of the Stile, togegether with ſome other ſhort Remarks. The being Elaborate and endeavouring to write ſo Elegantly, cauſes me to take ſome notice of his Stile, otherwiſe too inſignificant to be obſerv'd: For in my life, I never read ſo much bombaſt Elo-

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quence, forced ſentences, and improper Engliſh; and that an *Iriſhman*, who hath not been many years ſucceſſively in *England*, ſhould pretend to be a patern in Oratory, is as bad as to pretend to explain the myſteries of Chriſtianity by making them more myſterious: In ſhort, that I may now at laſt come in good earneſt to make good the Title, I do ſay that Mr. *Toland* ought to be forgiven his Ignorance, Conceitedneſs, and want of Learning, ſince he is ſo young a man; and if he hath aim'd at what he has not perform'd, you ſhould not be angry with him on that ſcore, for he will mend one time or other, and grow either better or worſe. He ſeems extreemly ſolicitous, leſt people ſhould interpret his deſign in a worſe manner than he meant it, and there-

therefore says, that offence is taken, not given; and his design is nothing the less good, if ill dispos'd persons abuse it, as they frequently do Learning, Reason, Scripture, and the best things in the World. By this he plainly insinuates that he thinks what he hath said is agreeable to all these, and one of the best Discourses in the World: now if this be his Opinion, and he hath writ to so much purpose, as my Apology has prov'd, let him persist therein with his settled judgment, and be free for the future from all manner of opposition or reflection.

FINIS.